

Education Governance Responses
Wilmington Meeting (4/9/07) – Twin Valley High School

16 Attendees (facilitated by Robin Scheu)

Question #1: What are the advantages and disadvantages of the present education governance system in your community?:

Advantages

True local control
Knowledge of local concerns
Committed local volunteers
Smallness/more personalized
More budgetary accountability
Fair representation of the populous
Direct representation of the voters
Familiar – not require change
Closer the connection, the greater the support or opposition & the ability to greater select who makes decisions.
Current board members are volunteers
People get involved for the right reasons
Encourages diverse thoughts and actions
Allows for more reflection

Disadvantages

Too many school boards, 1:75
Too many meetings
Geographic distance
Board micromanagement
Too many master agreements
Policy differences
Duplication of clerical tasks
Difficult to implement SU-wide initiatives
Cumbersome for the Administration
Communication is not always effective
Lack of uniformity & coordination among districts
Cost (time, finances)
Difficult for long term planning
Hard to get people to run for the board.

Question #2: What are the advantages and disadvantages of the school district model suggested by Commissioner Cate in his White Paper?

Advantages

Fewer board meetings
Possible administrative savings
One master agreement – 1 set of policies
Share resources
Retain and attract quality administrators

- More uniform curricula
- Leads to development of common goals (consistency)
- Facilitate innovation
- Increase longevity of Superintendents
- Would have more people to run for office (easier to fill one slot)
- Economy of scale
- Easier to develop consistent policies & curriculum
- Less cumbersome

Disadvantages

- Negotiation/Budget chaos (discrepancy in resources)
- Diminished local control (board members w/o ownership)
- Increases Inter-local conflict (i.e., vested interest in buildings)
- Divergent board member interest
- One board hard to represent entire community interest (who would want this position)
- Educational responsibilities w/o monetary controls
- Less direct accountability
- Creates more of a hierarchical system: top down
- No demonstrated improvement of student learning or tax dollars saved (Data?)
- Plan is based on many assumptions
- Disconnect between schools, communities & costs
- Loss of community values & what is important to them in their school
- Too many unanswered questions regarding implementation & funding
- This solution has not demonstrated that it solves a problem or addresses the causes of the problem

Debrief Comments:

- Uniform policies per SU and master agreement
- Maintain current system and tweak master agreement system
- Change funding formula
- Separate building operations from education
- Remove SpEd from education budget
- What problem are we trying to solve?
- Clarify school choice. Do students who go to a district w/no secondary, do they have to go to new SU high school/middle school?
- Who votes on school budget for each town?
- What if one town doesn't agree?
- How are SU resources allocated?
- PLEASE! Show us date to support this new model.
- What are the characteristics of an ideal school governance model from the perspectives of how we deliver education & how we pay for it?
- If this new model is not implemented what components of it could be integrated into the current model?
- Address funding issues!
- Equity(?) one school system to the next in terms of product delivered to school.
- Facilities inequities sending/receiving towns
- Reliance on penalties – prefer reliance on incentives